

ABOUT MUSIC

– By Mariss McTucker

Trevor Rogers: *Are You Happy Now?*

Recorded by Trevor Rogers and Tyler Thompson in Vancouver, BC; mixed and mastered by Richie Reinholdt at animaltown studios, Missoula, MT; produced by Trevor Rogers and Tyler Thompson, 2014.

Trevor Rogers, a Clumsy Lovers bandmate from Vancouver, BC, has released an album of original songs. A former denizen of Missoula who recently relocated to Oregon with his family, Rogers sports an agreeable baritone and a deft touch on the guitar. His tunes are fleshed out by sidemen Robert Brouwer, keyboards, co-producer Tyler Thompson on drums and bass, and a trio of other bass players: Chris Jonat, Mark Rogers and Missoula's Richie Reinholdt.

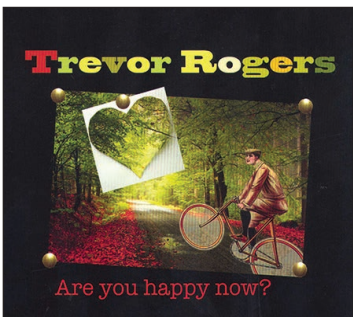
The songs span the pop vein with a smattering of rock and blues tossed in. Rogers is fond of octave singing – doing both low and high vocals in unison – which creates a pleasing “duo-of-one” effect on several songs.

He starts off with the title tune, a toe-tapper that bears a catchy melody, “Are You Happy Now?” Cool chord changes and a rock beat pervade the next tune, “She Only Likes Talking to Me (when I’m so far away).” A most excellent title, that!

Dreamy folk-styled guitar pickin’ and deep-down vocalizing color “Waiting, Hoping, Listening.” The hook is multi-tiered and pretty. “Keep Calm” has a moody, Ventures-meet-the-Beach-Boys nuance, with its slowly rocking 60’s sound; and Rogers reveals his inner Beatle by emulating snippets of Abbey Road on “Watch Your Garden Grow.” It’s a layered and richly mixed delivery of sound that is familiar yet new.

Good production abounds, and Rogers reports the CD is getting airplay in his home country. Watch for the return of the Clumsy Lovers in August.

Visit Rogers at trevorrogersmusic.com.



Mike Murray: *Balance and Rhythm*

Recorded by John Conner, Ryan Hudson, and Mike Murray at Somerset Studio, Launchpad Studios, and Immersive Studios in Colorado; mixed by Mike Flack at Launchpad Studios; and produced by Ryan Hudson, 2013.

Kalispell’s well-traveled Mike Murray makes quite the departure from his mellow debut CD, *International*, with this rockin’ five-song EP. He plays all the instruments except bass on “Down the Line” (Owen Tharp), and synthesizer on “Red Hot Woman” and “Fun” (Ryan Hudson). The hard-edged, raw-yet-supple feel to Murray’s new sound illuminates the emotion he’s written into his compositions.

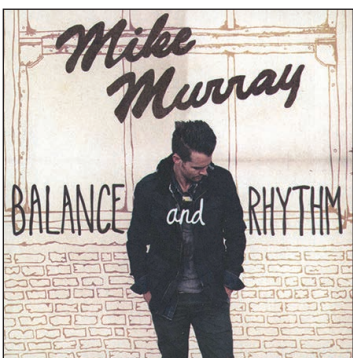
“Balance and Rhythm” comes first; Murray first tears off a terrific guitar riff. His burnished tenor pops into falsetto mode, jumping and squiggling with breathy syncopation, backed by chunks of brawny guitar chords. A wailing guitar, distorted and off-meter, punctuates the lyric. “Everybody wants to fly but they don’t wanna come back down; everybody wants a piece of pie, there ain’t enough to go around,” goes the message.

A finger-snappin’ blues-rock tune, “Red Hot Woman,” follows. Lots of fuzzed-out guitar and synthesized trumpet sounds back up Murray’s strong and malleable pipes when he sings, “She’s a red hot woman and she’ll eat you alive.”

Verses gush like a waterfall on “Fun,” with its biting guitar and vocal effects. It’s hard-rockin’ and has a great hook. “Down the Line,” with a thumpin’ disco tempo, gets the heart pumping; it’s a great song to drive fast to.

This small slice of Murray’s latest makes you want to see him live. Watch for him performing around the state with his trio this summer.

Visit the artist at mikemurraytunes.com.



GT Hurley: *War Horse*

Recorded by Steve Lemmon and Ryan Tilby at Spiral Studios, St. George, UT, mixed by Ryan Tilby, and produced by Brenn Hill and Ryan Tilby, 2014.

Big Timber’s musical son, guitarist/songwriter GT Hurley, has a new album to his credit. He takes his ideas from friends’ stories and his own experiences as an ex-Marine and horse breeder to craft dance-hall music in the country-rock vein, vocalized with a tablespoon of Waylon Jennings. Singing original compositions and one cover, Hurley proves his thick and robust baritone is in good form.

“A lot of my inspiration comes from history,” Hurley says. “I don’t have a tremendous amount of drink-a-beer-pick-up-a-chick tunes.”

It’s obvious in his songwriting. And he likes ballads. A good example: in the lilting waltz, “Montana Wind,” Hurley whispers, “... ghosts of old hookers and buckaroos haunt the old saloons.” He makes us feel the ambience.

He can rock, too. The age-old story of falling for the wrong woman gets the limelight in the Waylon-esque “Everclear Strong”; and his cool rendition of George McCorkle’s country-rock epic, “Fire on the Mountain,” is more rock than country.

Banjo and mandolin start “Lipstick Buckaroo,” a salute to the cowgirl who can do the work and then get dressed to the nines for a night out.

There’s a taste of Bob Wills’ Texas swing in “Sunrises and Sunsets,” and “Six String Mistress” offers a tongue-in-cheek look at the guitar a musician loves.

“I play this high-strung lady every chance I can,” Hurley sings. It’s a snappy, shuffly blues with a knock-out Dobro break that slithers and slides all over the place. Whew!

The title tune, “War Horse,” is a true story of ex-soldiers in Texas, and a snare drum gets the nod in “The Reminder,” a poem by one of Hurley’s friends set to music. It’s a deliberate and stately dirge, quite moving.

Hurley nails the western Americana feel, because he’s authentic. And his fine cast of pickers provides the audio color for the songs, so he’s getting national airplay as a result.

His countrywide release will jibe with an article pending in a national publication later in summer, but Montanans get treated to an early album release. Watch for his performances around Montana. Visit www.gthurley.com



Kickstar: *Waiting for Discovery*

Produced and engineered by Dan Harnett, Shore Sound, Middletown, NJ, 2014.

Conrad-based Kickstar has just released their four-song EP of hard-nosed rock ‘n roll anthems. The album’s trio consists of Dana Hughes on bass and lead vocals, her husband Jimi Hughes on guitars, and Jeri Fouhy on guitars and vocals. The band’s current live incarnation is new, with Eric Sundgren on drums and vocals, replacing Fouhy.

Power rock is the name of the game here. “You Will Be Mine,” a love song with a confident message, comes first; it features a massive wall of overdriven guitar sounds underneath Dana Hughes’s light yet robust voice. The slightly mysterious chords and screaming high notes contribute to the flavor.

“Perfect Girl” has some Hughes ooh-oohs to start, as she sings harmony lead with herself. She then calls and answers herself on the lyric. This sparsely arranged piece is highlighted by zesty drums and guitar, and an intriguing chord structure on the hook.

Hughes shows off some influences (Pat Benatar and Joan Jett) with just the right wait to her voice on “Get Up and Run.” It’s fast moving with great slabs of guitar chords bubbling into the warped-out sound of electric guitar.

Tight rhythm and slappin’ drum work lead into a catchy hook on “You Fail.” “Ooh baby this ain’t for sale, this time you did me wrong, you fail,” Hughes vocalizes. This one is perfect for dancing in the street.

The group has been signed by Tate Music Group of Oklahoma to a recording contract, and is hoping to do a full-length work soon.

Visit them at www.kickstar.com.



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State of the Arts welcomes CDs

State of the Arts welcomes CD submissions by Montana musicians for inclusion in the About Music section. The recordings must be professional, commercially available, full-length CDs, with cover art and liner notes. Brief biographical information on band members would be helpful to the writer.

Please send submissions to either the Montana Arts Council, PO Box 202201, Helena, MT, 59620; or *Lively Times*, 33651 Eagle Pass Trl., Charlo, MT 59824.

Kalispell composer contributes to *Gettysburg at 150* CD

By Mariss McTucker

Kalispell composer Craig Naylor has three ambitious pieces on *Gettysburg at 150: Music of the American Civil War 1863-2013*, a recent CD commemorating the sesquicentennial anniversary of America’s homegrown war.

The compositions incorporate religious hymns that reflect various timelines in the war; they are wedded to original classical music that pays homage to little-known personalities behind the conflict. Naylor refers to the three pieces as “Unknown Heroes of the Civil War.”

His compositions are nestled among 10 jewels of music from that period, including “Oh Shenandoah” and “Ashokan Farewell,” performed by the Sunderman Conservatory Wind Symphony of Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA.

Naylor’s contributions begin with “Enduring Honor,” paying respect to the Episcopal tradition of



companionment; the lightness of a piccolo answering the charge, belying the foreboding mood to come.

The stately melange of a chorale builds into a call to arms. The loud clap of drum and bold, moody brass transition to the glory of a full orchestra, back out quietly, mirroring the waxing and waning of the campaign.

Next comes the high call of a piccolo, mingling with hand shakers, in “We Are All Americans.” This

Elizabeth Van Lew, an abolitionist who ran the Richmond Underground during the war. Of the two songs of praise used in the Naylor number, one was sung on the fourth day of Easter, the day when Virginia seceded from the Union, and one on Palm Sunday, the day Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

In-between those dates, Naylor depicts the battle: we hear the somber tap of a snare drum; a breath of quiet winds that segue into a march with snare accompaniment.

segment simulates the eagle-bone whistle and Round Dance rhythm in the Seneca tradition of attorney Ely Parker, who wrote the terms of surrender at Appomattox. Parker converted to Protestantism, and Naylor infuses this composition with an anthem sung at Parker’s funeral.

Naylor’s third piece starts with a hymn written by Leila Naylor Morris in 1899. (Naylor is not sure if he’s related.) It’s a tribute to John Washington, an escaped slave and Union Army officer, who, when called to by Union soldiers across the Rappahannock River in 1862, replied, “Yes, I Want to Cross Over.” It ends with the traditional and upbeat “Oh, Happy Day,” adding an uplifting gospel flavor.

The FVCC music professor is an active composer with many prestigious commissions to his credit, and he’s in demand for obvious reasons: he has a talent for spinning sensational melody lines into fine ear candy. This album was on the short list for the recent Grammys in classical music, and I say pick it up. If it leads you to learn more about the War Between the States, all the better.

Visit the artist at swanriverpress.com.